

**WISCONSIN INTEROPERABILITY COMMITTEE ON RADIO & TOWER SYSTEMS
(WICORTS)**

WEDNESDAY, FEBRUARY 18, 2004

11:00AM – 3:00PM

**The Ridges Supper Club
Hosted by Wood County**

Wood County Sheriff Kurt Heuer welcomed attendees to Wisconsin Rapids and to the WICORTS meeting.

John Verhyen gave a presentation on Strategies for Statewide Interoperability.

- Present interoperability planning efforts
- Statewide Interoperability Executive Committee (SIEC) facts and issues
- Map of regional interoperability planning committees and guidelines
- Short and long term planning & timelines
- Spreadsheets on voice/data frequency, technology and cost statuses

(Please e-mail john.verhyen@dot.state.wi.us for a copy of the handout.)

Lunch

Questions and Discussion:

Paul Wittkamp, DHFS/EMS – Karen Carlson, Chairperson of the Region 45 700MHz Planning Committee, will be distributing a letter in regard to establishing an SIEC at the next Badger Sheriff's Association Executive Committee meeting on February 25.

Al Wisler, Marathon Co. – Regarding zoning for constructing towers, there appears to be a one-way street. Any ordinance changes should benefit both state and local governments.

Gale Sorum, Consultant for OJA - From a tower standpoint each community must give proper credence to an FCC licensed operation. The local government has to have a very good reason not to allow construction of a tower 70 feet or less.

About a year and half ago, "PRB1" was introduced in Wisconsin legislature, passed, and was signed by the Governor. It cuts through zoning roadblocks as long as it is reasonable and you own the land.

Don Pagenkopf, Northway Comm/Retired WIANG – If an agency is in need of upgrading their system, it should be understood that if they are ready to proceed, they should go ahead. They don't have to wait until an enterprise system is built.

Shelly Hutter, State Patrol – Madison PD just went to an 800 MHz system. Even though an officer is just 100 yards away, she cannot communicate with them because the State Patrol is on a different system.

John Leighty, DNR – We have a similar problem, DNR has wardens that have to carry 3 portable radios so they can communicate. From a tower standpoint, our own Parks Division won't let us put up towers for our own use.

Gary Adler, DNR representing Forestry – The DNR has fire crews fighting wildfires with radios that need replacement. But no one has money to buy new radios.

David Hewitt, State Patrol, Communications – I hope we continue to communicate, plan, and exchange information, now and into the future. This is very important.

Jason Rasmussen, Wausau PD – The WICORTS meetings are very informative. It was interesting to see the maps that show the regional coordinator areas. The Central Region had a meeting with Tim Klopstein of Wood County. Regional areas without a coordinator should be searching for one.

John Verhyen - There is limited amount of work that coordinators would need to do. We will help with organization, agendas and provide documents to work from.

Duane Willborn, Ozaukee Co. – Who is opposing an SIEC (Statewide Interoperability Executive Committee)?

John Verhyen – The opposition is not with agencies or people, the issue is simply a collective lack of verbal and written support. We need people actively supporting this. The enterprise system will make every effort to tie into your system to have interoperability. So even if an agency already has a system in place, you can still support it.

Duane Willborn, Ozaukee Co. – What is the process to get an SIEC formed?

John Verhyen – We need written and or verbal support and projects like the OJA study that Federal Engineering is doing. The OJA study is due for release in June. For more information contact Gale Sorum 715-723-3926 or Jim Koleas 608-516-9668.

Jim Koleas , OJA - There is a proposed extension of time for funding. This will give OJA time to get the P25 issue resolved. Jim Koleas 608-516-9668 cell phone.

Federal Engineering Study will assess:

- 1) The current state of interoperability thru interviews and using the WEM study to provide assessment
- 2) Skills and leadership investment, how capable and prepared users feel in today's environment. Where do you think you are in state of the art technology and ability to communicate with surrounding areas?

3) Where is interoperability today? Based on what we have heard, what kind of architecture should be developed?

Al Wohlferd, WEM – Wisconsin Emergency Management has acquired 2 mobile incident units for emergency exercises and events. The PGA tournament that will take place near Kohler in August will require many agencies to interact. All of a sudden, for one week we will need to communicate. Plus the Mississippi Great excursion in June will be another event requiring interoperability. At this event we will need to communicate between two states.

Gale Sorum OJA consultant – At the Governors Conference March 30, at the Appleton Paper Vally Inn, I will be giving a presentation. My intent is to take a topic I've defined as interoperability and plagiarize what John is doing and mix it with an outsider's view (mine) and spend 2/3 of the time on a definable repeatable process while interweaving a number of processes discussed here. To fill in the last 3rd, I am taking off on P25 hardware, a technical discussion to a non-technical audience, fielding of questions like "I don't need that", or "I have a system that works fine". I will discuss some simple ways to eliminate towers completely. Call Gale on OJA activities 715-723-3926

Paul Wittkamp, EMS – We need to get street level users interested to take interoperability to the next step. There should be regional interoperability planning committees set up around the state so we can move on.

John Verhyen – The State should build a backbone substantial enough to take care of the main infrastructure. Later we can sit down and talk about agencies' specific needs and going through a process so all of this gets worked out. Hopefully the OJA steering committee and the Federal Engineering study will help to work out all the issues. We need to start focusing. We can't possibly do what everybody wants. It's important for locals go get involved. We need input so we can make recommendations to OJA that benefits every public safety agency.

Kathy Schnagel, Milwaukee Co. – I'm glad to see there is some forward movement.

John Verhyen – There is a desire to do multiple pilots as well (as part of study). The State won't be shutting down present systems but will work towards connecting them together. That's why we would like to see a multi-band system.

Tom Hansen, Iola PD – We need to stress the importance of getting to the local level. We need better MDCN coverage in our area.

John Verhyen - Even though there is not 100 percent coverage we strive to get good coverage to all our customers. Permission to build tower sites is hard to obtain and of course zoning issues are a problem.

Federal Engineering - In our process we are trying to find out how you define interoperability, and continually re-defining as we go thru the interview process. We're using OJA's definition: "talking wherever and whoever you need to talk to". There are also frequency and needs issues.

Gene Oldenburg, W. Milwaukee PD – Keep the end user in mind. They want to push a button and get the information they need in a timely and easy fashion. More people are coming onto our 800 MHz system. There has been a gradual migration with growing pains. Now the fire system is looking at coming onto our 800 system. We are also looking to interact with other counties.

John Verhyen - We would like to have a meeting in SE Wisconsin. We need to discuss connectivity.

Gene Oldenburg - Motor vehicle inspectors that come into our county can't talk to us.

Steve Sporle, Iowa Co. – We still use 150 Mhz. The last few years the common talk around channel was MARC II. We are trying to convince Richland and Grant counties to put all WISTAC frequencies in their radios. That's our goal for right now.

Carl Guse, WI Frequency Coord - Is it still a concern of the state to expand? All it takes is money. We would still like to see MARC repeater coverage through the state. Most of the repeaters in operation are owned and operated at the county level. There are a few new ones coming on in the future. There is no funding for MARC bases, but perhaps the counties can use grant funds. That's what Ozaukee did, and Chippewa and Eau Claire Counties as well.

John Corbin, DOT Highway Operations – Highway incident management, plowing roads or making traffic signals work, relies not just on voice, but increasingly on data sharing and video and image sharing. The data we are currently collecting includes real time weather, traffic incident information, and in the Milwaukee area and more recently Madison, video surveillance. We are shadowing the OJA study, looking at public safety and highway operation capability and recognizing a need to dovetail with capabilities that the OJA effort is investigating. We look forward to adapting our infrastructure functions.

John Verhyen – John asked if anyone had concerns on the SIEC document, or the concept. There was none. John said since all are satisfied this will be the final version. Karen Carlson will be presenting the SIEC letter and we will be presenting these 2 documents at the Badger Sheriff's meeting next week.

Adjourned.